

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04

USIA-06 SAM-01 OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00

ACDA-07 DHA-02 PA-01 PRS-01 /114 W

----- 121931

R 130840Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 682

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19716

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ENRG, VS

SUBJECT: PETROLEUM EXPLORATION IN SOUTHERN VIET-NAM

SUMMARY: FRENCHMEN INVOLVED IN PETROLEUM EXPLORATION  
ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN VIET-NAM DESCRIBE THEIR FRUSTRATIONS  
AND THEIR COMPANY'S SUCCESSES TO DATE. END SUMMARY.

1. ARRIVING IN BANGKOK FROM SAIGON JULY 10 ON FRENCH  
EVACUATION FLIGHT WERE TWO FRENCH EMPLOYEES OF THE  
COMPAGNIE GENERALE DE GEOPHYSIQUE (CGG), UNDER CONTRACT  
TO THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT TO EXPLORE FOR PETROLEUM.  
THE TWO MADE NO EFFORT IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF TO  
HIDE THEIR DISGUST WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THEY SAID THEIR  
FIRM IS BEING CONTINUALLY BLOCKED EVERY STEP OF THE WAY  
BY SUSPICIOUS VIETNAMESE BUREAUCRATS: A DECISION IS MADE  
AT A HIGH LEVEL, MONOR OFFICIALS PLACE OBSTACLES IN THE  
WAY OF ITS EXECUTION, THE COMPANY MUST APPEAL TO HANOI,  
WHICH IN TURN MUST ACT TO REMOVE THE OBSTACLE. ALL IN  
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ALL WORKING THERE IS VERY FRUSTRATING, ALTHOUGH OUR

SOURCES THOUGHT THEIR FIRM WOULD REMAIN SO LONG AS THE VIETNAMESE PAY.

2. THE TWO FRENCHMEN HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE DELTA PHASE OF THE EXPLORATION, WORKING IN THE VINH LONG, CAN THO, LONG XUYEN AREAS. THEY REPORTED THAT CGG FOUND IN ITS FIRST SERIOUS EXPLORATION EFFORT IN THE DELTA A HIGHLY PROMISING DEPOSIT BUT DID NOT GIVE ITS LOCATION. THEY NOTED THAT ATTACHED TO THEIR GROUP WERE A NUMBER OF NORTH VIETNAMESE COUNTERPARTS WHOM THEY DESCRIBED--ASKING THAT WE PARDON THE EXPRESSION--AS PEASANTS. THE LATTER HAD NO TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE AND WERE FAR MORE TROUBLE THAN THEY WERE WORTH.

3. SOURCES SAID THE MOOD IN THE DELTA WAS NOT AT ALL SYMPATHETIC TO THE AUTHORITIES. THEY HEARD CONTINUALLY OF FIGHTING TAKING PLACE IN THE DELTA AND SUGGESTED THAT THE AUTHORITIES WOULD HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME WINNING OVER THE LOCAL POPULATION.

4. IN ITS OFFSHORE PHASE, CGG HAS RECENTLY SUCCEEDED IN LOCATING WITH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY THE PIPES MARKING THE TEST HOLES DRILLED BY AMERICAN OIL FIRMS BEFORE THE FALL, THE TWO CLAIMED, INDICATING THAT THIS WAS CONSIDERED A SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT. TO DO THIS, CGG HAD BEEN EXAMINING THE ENTIRE AREA FROM OFFSHORE VUNG TAU TO PHU QUOC ISLAND.

5. THE MEN COMPLAINED THAT ONE COULD NO LONGER GO TO VUNG TAU TO SWIM. THEY SAID IT IS NOW OFF LIMITS TO EVERYONE SINCE 400-500 PERSONS HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ESCAPING FROM THERE. TOLD THAT SOME OF THE ESCAPEES, INCLUDING THE CHIEF PILOT OF SAIGON, REACHED SOUTHERN THAILAND A MONTH AGO, A VIETNAMESE LISTENING TO THE CONVERSATION WHO FORMERLY WORKED IN THE CHIEF PILOT'S OFFICE REMARKED THAT PILOTS WORKING AT THE PORT OF SAIGON HAVE ALL BEEN PLACED UNDER SURVEILLANCE SINCE THE CHIEF PILOT'S FLIGHT.

6. COMMENT: OUR SOURCES' COMMENTS ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES  
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CGG IS HAVING IN CARRYING OUT ITS CONTRACT WITH THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE HAVE HEARD ELSEWHERE. EMBASSY HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY KNOWN OF THE DELTA AND OFFSHORE DISCOVERIES WHICH THEY DESCRIBED.  
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## Message Attributes

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